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DEPT FOR WHA/CCA AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2034  
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [CU](#)  
SUBJECT: (C/NF) THE CHURCH AND TRANSITION IN CUBA  
(C-AL9-01566)

REF: STATE 80209

Classified By: Chief of Mission Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (c) and  
(d)

1. (SBU) This cable is in response to reftel. We will also keep the questions in mind as we continue to meet with relevant contacts.

2. (C/NF) QUESTION A: ARE CHURCH OFFICIALS CULTIVATING CUBAN PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, ACCOUNTANTS, PROJECT DIRECTORS, ETC? IF SO, HOW? WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF COURTING PROFESSIONAL DESIGNED INDEPENDENTLY BY PARISHES?

(C/NF) POST RESPONSE: We do not see evidence of such targeted proselytizing. The church hierarchy, from the Cardinal on down to parish priests, complains that emigration decimates the ranks of the laity and that they have to engage in constant recruitment merely to replace those laity who emigrate. We have no reason to believe that those efforts target professionals in particular.

3. (C/NF) QUESTION B: ARE CHURCH MEMBERS RUNNING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CLASSES? IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING ARE PARISHES PROVIDING (I.E. FOREIGN LANGUAGES, CRITICAL THINKING, BUSINESS MANAGE

(C/NF) POST RESPONSE: We have seen several examples of parishes and at least one convent that provide training in computers and foreign languages. (Note: denominations have similar activities. End Note.) XXXXXXXXXXXX also tells us he does some training at his parish in Santiago de Cuba. Computer training is the most common. The San Juan de Letran church in Vedado has a monthly lecture series on theological issues that attracts 100 or more, mainly university-age, participants. The Mission to the Order of Malta provides equipment (projector, video camera, etc.) for some workshops promoting spiritual cinema. Otherwise, we are not familiar with churches that run the type of courses mentioned in reftel.

4. (C/NF) QUESTION C: ARE LOWER-LEVEL CUBAN CLERGY AND LAY PEOPLE PROVIDING TRAINING AND/OR CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES NOT APPROVED BY THE HIERARCHY THROUGH CHURCH ACTIVITIES? FROM SCHOOLS? ARE INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT PREVIOUS ENTREPRENEURIAL OR POLITICAL SKILLS BEING TRAINED? HOW LONG HAVE THE

(C/NF) POST RESPONSE: The classes of which we are aware are offered to all parishioners on a first-come, first-served basis. These are mostly modest efforts. These programs go back at least several years. Our experience with contacts is that these programs are known to the Church hierarchy and that in many cases the hierarchy provides "cover" for such activities with the relevant Government of Cuba (GOC) authorities.

5. (C/NF) QUESTION D: DOES ANY EVIDENCE EXIST TO SUGGEST THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS SEEKING TO MEDIATE A DIALOGUE IN CUBA'S CURRENT POLITICAL  
(C/NF) POST RESPONSE: We've seen articles as described in reftel in both Espacio Laical and in Palabra Nueva, which recently ran a two-part series

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Comments  
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16. (C/NF) The Catholic Church is slowly increasing the scope of the activities it is willing and able to conduct in Cuba. The relief work of distance itself from well-known opposition figures who are also devout Catholics such as Oswaldo Paya and Dagoberto Valdes. As such, any activity FARRAR